

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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UNCLAS BELFAST 139

SEPTEMBER 7, 1973.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UK. (NI), EI

SUBJECT: HEATH VISIT TO COSGRAVE

SUMMARY: MOST COMMENT HERE ON PROPOSED HEATH VISIT TO COSGRAVE ASSUMED MAJOR POINT OF CONVERSATION WOULD BE TO DEVELOP IDEAS ON "IRISH DIMENSION." REACTIONS, ON THIS BASIS, WERE UTTERLY PREDICTABLE: MAJORITY REPRESENTATIVES: COOL TO AGAINST AND FEARFUL. MINORITY REPRESENTATIVES: WARMLY ENTHUSIASTIC AND CONFIDENT. CENTER MODERATES: VISIT CAN'T HURT AND MIGHT HELP.

1. THOSE WHO HAVE COMMENTED ON PM HEATH'S PLANNED VISIT TO TAOISEACH COSGRAVE STARTED FROM ASSUMPTION THAT MAJOR POINT OF TALKS WOULD BE ELABORATION BY BOTH MEN OF THEIR IDEAS TO FULFILL PROMISE OF GREEN PAPERS "IRISH DIMENSION". REACTIONS WERE PREDICTABLE.

2. FAULKNER (OFFICIAL UNIONIST) GAVE GUARDED WELCOME TO VISIT: STRESSED IT WOULD BE WORTHWHILE IF PURPOSE WAS FURTHER TO DEVELOP COOPERATION ON SECURITY. FAULKNER WARNED OF

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DANGER OF ULSTER'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS BEING DISCUSSED, AND

REMINDED HEATH OF LATTER'S PAST PROMISE "THESE ARE ONLY FOR PEOPLE OF N.I. TO SETTLE".

3. PAISLEY (DUP) SAID HEATH'S "VISIT TO A REPUBLIC WHICH HARBORS AND SUCCOURS MURDERERS. . . IS BUT A FURTHER STEP IN ULSTER'S BETRAYAL. THE ULSTER LOYALIST PEOPLE ARE BEING SOLD OUT REPUBLICANISM BIT BY BIT. THE COUNCIL OF IRELAND IS PART OF THE MACHINERY OF THIS SELLOUT AND MR. HEATH IS VISITING THE REPUBLIC TO HELP SET IT UP. WHEN MR. FAULKNER SAT DOWN WITH MR. LYNCH AT THE TRIPARTITE TALKS HE GAVE COUNTENANCE TO THE FOLLY THAT THE EIRE PRIME MINISTER HAS A RIGHT TO A SAY IN OUR AFFAIRS. MR. HEATH'S VISIT IS BUT A FURTHERANCE OF THE FOLLY COUNTENANCED BY MR. FAULKNER."

4. CRAIG (VUPP) DESCRIBED IDEA OF VISIT AS UNWISE IF PURPOSE IS TO DISCUSS ULSTER'S AFFAIRS. "IT WILL FURTHER UNDERMINE ULSTER'S CONFIDENCE IN THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT." VISIT COULD ONLY BE WELCOME IF MR. HEATH PLANNED TO SAY THAT ALL-IRELAND COUNCIL IS NOT ON.

5. COOPER (ALLIANCE) WELCOMED VISIT AND NOVED THAT EVEN IF THERE IS "PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ON THEIR DIFFERING VIEWS OF A COUNCIL OF IRELAND. IBVIOUSLY NONE OF THIS CAN BE SETTLED UNTIL THERE IS CONSULTATION WITH THE NEW NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE".

6. FILL (SDLP) HOPED VISIT WOULD "OPEN UP NEW ERA IN ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS, PARTICULARLY AS BOTH COUNTRIES ARE NOW MEMBERS OF THE E.E.C.." CONFERENCE BETWEEN TWO HEADS OF GOVERNMENT "COULD HELP END THE TRAGEDY NORTHERN IRELAND HAS SUFFERED FOR MANY YEARS." HUME ADDED HOPE THAT "DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE TAOISEACH AND MR. HEATH WILL HAVE POSITIVE RESULTS" ON THREE "CRUCIAL FRONTS" FOR SDLP: "POLICING, INTERNMENT AND THE IRISH DIMENSION".

7. MARRY DRUMM (PROVO SINN FEIN) SAID SHE RESENTED INTRUSION (IN IRELAND) OF ANY ENGLISHMAN HEATH IS COMING "IN THE ROLE OF AN INVADER. WE DON'T WANT HIM".

8. NEWS LETTER (UNIONIST) OPINED THAT "HEATH CHOOSES THIS AS THE TIME TO MAKE A SIGNIFICANT STEP FOR WHICH THERE CAN BE UNCLASSIFIED

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NO GENERAL WELCOME IN NORTHERN IRELAND. . . THE FACT THAT THERE HAS BEEN HEAVY POLITICAL TRAFFIC (COMMENT: IE BY SDLP POLITICAIS,) IN RECENT WEEKS. AND THAT THERE IS NOW TO BE THE FIRST SUMMIT OF ITS KIND FOR 50 YEARS, CAN DO NOTHING TO DISPEL MOUNTING SUSPICIONS IN ULSTER THAT THE FUTURE OF OUR LAND IS BEING DESIGNED NOT FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE, BUT FOR THE MINORITY.

9. IRISH NEWS (NATIONALIST) THOUGHT THE VISIT SHOWS THAT H.M.GMN

HAVING DETERMINED ASSEMBLY CAN BE MADE TO WORK, NOW IS WILLING TO MAKE UP FOR "INORDINATELY WEAK" EXPRESSION OF IRISH DIMENSION IN WHITE PAPER AND GET TO WORK ON COUNCIL OF IRELAND. VISIT REMINDS ALL THAT, "IN THE END, IT IS WHAT WESTMINSTER AND DUBLIN DECIDE THAT COUNTS JUST NOW. MR. HEATH COULD OFFER EVEN HARSHER ALTERNATIVES THAN A CONTINUANCE OF DIRECT RULE IF UNIONIST REFUSAL TO COOPERATION WITH THE ASSEMBLY IS PERSISTED IN. FOR IT HAS COME DOWN TO THIS: THAT BELIEF IN UNIONIST LOYALTY HAS TAKEN A BEATING IN BRITISH GOVERNMENT CIRCLES . . . BRITAIN, TO HER DISCOMFORT, HAS AT LAST REALISED THE ENORMITY OF THE MISTAKE IN PARTITIONING IRELAND CREATING IN A CORNER OF IT A PROTESTANT ORANGE ASCENDANCY WHICH COULD ONLY FUNCTION ON INJUSTICE TOWARDS, AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST, THE LARGE CATHOLIC MINORITY. DIRECT RULE, AND NOW THE ASSEMBLY, ARE NECESSARY STAGES ON THE WAY TO A SOLUTION WHICH LIES IN THE ULTIMATE REUNION OF IRELAND IN THE FUTURE . . . MR. HEATH'S DECISION TO TALK IN DUBLIN ABOUT THE COUNCIL OF IRELAND MEANS THAT THE IDEA OF A POSITIVE UNIONIST STATE IN THIS CORNER SIMPLY WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED."

10. BELFAST TELEGRAPH COMMENTED THAT VISIT IS "PERFECTLY NATURAL AND UNEXCEPTIONABLE," FOR "THE IRISH DIMENSION TO THE ULSTER CRISIS IS NO LONGER IN QUESTION". THE "PRIME OBJECTIVE OF THE TALKS IS TO USE THE COMBINED WEIGHT OF BRITISH AND IRISH DIPLOMACY TO GET THE ULSTER EXECUTIVE OFF THE GROUND". THERE WILL BE NO DRAMATIC INITIATIVES "NOTHING FOR EITHER SIDE TO REJOICE OR DESPAIR ABOUT". LEAD EDITORIAL SUMMED UP BY SAYING "HEATH'S VISIT UNDERLINES BRITAIN'S INTEREST IN EARLY PROGRESS TO BOTH THE COUNCIL (OF IRELAND) AND THE EXECUTIVE. IF BRITAIN AND THE REPUBLIC CAN REACH AN REASONABLE AGREEMENT, THOSE WHO STAND OUT AGAINST THEM IN NORTHERN IRELAND RUN THE RISK OF BEING LEFT TO GO IT ALONE."
PENBERTHY

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